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Limitations of the leading definition of 'internationalisation' of higher education: is the idea wrong or is the fault in reality?

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ABSTRACT

The paper critically reviews the widely adopted definition of 'internationalisation' of higher education shaped by Knight and colleagues since 1993 through successive revisions and intended for universal application. Here, internationalisation is defined as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension' into post-secondary education. The definition has long led cross-border scholarship, discourse and practice, being promoted in support of a wide range of governmental, commercial and institutional agendas. However, the disjunction between idea and reality has increasingly troubled advocates of the definition; and underlying this tension are more fundamental difficulties. It attempts to unify contradictory cross-border practices under the leadership of the global West/North. The geography of the definition rests on an ideological binary of 'globalisation' (bad) and 'internationalisation' (good) that locks practitioners into nation-bound approaches. The definition is non-relational in form yet relational in consequence, focused on characteristics of the self – the person, the institution, the nation – without regard for the consequences of internationalisation for the other. Hence when applied by Western/Northern agents the definition facilitates continued Euro-American domination. The paper suggests a different approach to terminology, geography, relationality and power in cross-border education.

Introduction

In a globally connected world in which a jig-saw of nation-states lead social organisation, it is necessary to have a term for the growth of educational relations across national borders. The literal term is 'internationalisation'; a term that after World War II became associated with a particular way of understanding the relations between nations (inter-national relations), in the proceedings of multilateral organisations and in disciplines like international relations. But the meaning of the word in the context of higher education studies is neither clear, nor unproblematic in use. First, higher education includes more than one kind of activity beyond the nation-state. There is 'inter-national' activity such as student mobility that consists of movement between bordered nations. There is also 'global' activity that transcends national boundaries, as in science, and online

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programmes (Marginson 2022a). Second, 'internationalisation' has been used normatively in determined efforts to shape higher education in particular ways.

This paper is a work of critical scholarship that explores and explains the building of a dominant understanding of 'internationalisation' in higher education[1] and identifies the problems, contradictions and limits of that project. Specifically, the paper reviews and critiques the definition of internationalisation formulated by Jane Knight in the 1990s (hereafter the Definition OI), and widely used by scholars, practitioners, institutions and nations, while shepherded through successive explanations, amendments and justifications. The paper reflects on the ongoing interactions between concept building and the larger and changing environment. The underlying research entailed a critical reading of all of Knight's papers on internationalisation since 1993, together with a selection of papers by her collaborators and critics. The paper also draws on accumulating work by the author that reflects on the historical context (e.g. Marginson and Rhoades 2002; Marginson 2004; 2016; Marginson et al. 2010; Cantwell, Marginson, and Smolentseva 2018; Marginson 2022a; 2022d).

It is important to make clear at the outset that the paper focuses closely on the discursive practices associated with this particular (albeit highly significant) project, and does not seek to review and compare all other extant definitions of internationalisation or cross-border education in what is a large literature. Nor does the paper set out to create a new universal definition. Rather, the focus is on the origins and structuring of this idea and how it has been 'interacted with and transformed' in the world (Robertson 2021, 169).

It should be emphasised that the paper reflects on the idea not the person. It is not a biographical study and it does not reflect on Knight's scholarship as a whole, only the Definition of OI and evolving discussion of it. It does not discuss Knight's work on types of cross-border activity, education hubs (Knight 2014) and knowledge diplomacy (Knight 2019). Archer (1995; 2007) distinguishes between persons, actors and agents. Persons are reflective people moving through the world; agents have aims and resources; actors occupy a role within a field or organisation, a role independent of the person (Robertson 2021, 168–169). In education policy and practice, and parallel fields, certain knowledge producers come to occupy particular epistemic roles, as organic intellectuals. Their ideas gain currency and are joined to agents – often in organisations or states – with their interests, resources and practices. The wider the spread of the idea the more diverse such associations become. While Knight's name is closely associated with the Definition OI it has come to carry a larger set of meanings and associations, some not intended by Knight herself as she has testified.

Definitions matter

In discussing the meanings of 'globalisation' Scholte (2008) remarks that 'definition is not everything, but everything involves definition. Knowledge of globalisation is substantially a function of how the word is defined', necessitating 'a careful and critical examination of the term itself'. A sharp definition provides recurring insight and helps to guide practice. By the same token 'a muddled or misguided core concept compromises our overall comprehension of the problem' (1471). The advice applies equally to the term 'internationalisation'.

In its most widely used form the Definition OI is as follows:

> Internationalisation at the national, sector and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education. (Knight 2004a, 11)

This single totemic sentence is so well-known as to have become innocuous and commonplace. Yet the definition contains a tautology (internationalisation integrates the international) and conceals a raft of assumptions, judgments, problems and issues.

The Definition OI has been very frequently cited in research and official documents, especially in the Anglophone zone and Western Europe. At the time of writing[2] the most cited papers in the

definition's first decade (Knight 1994; Knight and de Wit 1995) had 1078 and 1030 Google Scholar cites respectively, and the most cited papers in the second decade, on the 'updated definition' (Knight 2003; 2004a) had 2491 and 4294 citations. Knight's paper co-authored with Phil Altbach on 'The internationalisation of higher education: Motivations and realities' (Altbach and Knight 2007) had 5366 citations. A content analysis of the *Journal of Studies in International Education* by Bedenlier, Kondakci, and Zawacki-Richter (2018) finds that the 1994 and 1995 articles were foundational to the field of research (118) and Knight authored or co-authored the most highly cited works (114–115).

The Definition OI has been adopted by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2007, 23), numerous governments, and sector organisations such as the International Association of Universities, American Council on Education (e.g. ACE 2015), and Universities UK. It is often quoted on the websites of universities where they parade their international programmes. This is a level of visible impact that most scholars can only dream of. Knight's definition is more unanimously supported by organisations than by scholars. It is avoided by many researchers who investigate global relations in higher education. Nevertheless, few maintain an open critique (some are discussed below). This combination of widespread open endorsement and largely unexpressed dissent indicates a high level of acceptance of the Definition OI. Knight's project and wording have come to exercise a discursive 'hegemony' in Gramsci's (1971) sense, referring to the manufacture of consent to the language, worldview and agenda of a dominant power (Lukes 2021).

However, influential ideas should be subjected to ongoing critical interrogation, given that no knowledge is complete and theories of the world can and must be viewed as fallible. Ideas should not take on the mantle of a fundamentalist orthodoxy. The present paper finds that the Definition OI is unable to adequately understand cross-border education so as to underpin scholarship. Nor can it shape practice as its proponents want. The paper will argue that the definition is overly normative and insufficiently explanatory, uses a truncated geography, claims a universality that cannot be achieved, and when applied in the practices of Euro-American higher education has regressive effects in the non Euro-American world.

These statements are evidenced and discussed below. The next section of the paper presents the findings of the research, a critical review of texts in three phases: origins of the Definition OI in the 1990s; the challenge of global knowledge economy ideas in the 2000s, triggering limited modifications in the definition; and the accumulating crisis of meaning among advocates of the definition in the 2010s. The discussion section expands on the definition's limitations and offers another kind of explanation, with reciprocal relationality.

An idea in three phases

This section summarises the results of the investigation underlying the paper, a critical review of the Definition OI, and discussion of it, in the changing historical setting.

Knight's Definition OI developed and became prominent in the decade after 1994. It was a period of rapid change, initiatives and excitement in cross-border higher education, amid a ferment of discussion about integration and convergence at the world level, or 'globalisation' (Held et al. 1999) in the economy, society, culture and education (see among many Rizvi and Lingard 2009; Robertson and Dale 2015; James and Steger 2016; Rizvi, Lingard, and Rinne 2022; Marginson 2022a; 2022b). Such times trigger the need for new explanations and new codes of conduct. Knight (1994) was among the many discursive innovations that emerged.

Various and conflicting perspectives, interests and strategies were in play. The international organisations and national policy makers who situated education in a global knowledge economy saw trade in educational services as a source of both capacity building and capital accumulation (e.g. OECD 2004; Bashir 2007). Many university leaders saw opportunities to expand their reach, status and income. Some scholars offered advice for nations or universities seeking global competitiveness

(e.g. Mazzarol and Soutar 2002 on 'push-pull' in student mobility). Other scholars theorised the emerging global setting, while critiquing the rush to educational markets (e.g. van der Wende 2002; Valimaa 2004; Dale 2005; Robertson 2005). Terminology itself was a battleground. Some scholars, drawing on Appadurai (1996), Castells (2000), Beck (2000) and others saw positive potentials of the global in electronic networking, cross-border civil society, cosmopolitan learning, new hybridities, and mobility beyond borders. A second group of scholars saw the undermining of national public good by global capital. They developed a good/evil binary distinction in which 'internationalisation' was associated with ideal democratic education and 'globalisation' with global capital writ large. For example: 'The current worldwide tide of globomania threatens to engulf moves towards genuine internationalisation of universities' (Welch 2002, 471). Knight (1999; 2004a) aligned with a milder version of this argument.

A third group of scholars saw all the elements in play: national and global, economic and cultural, positive and negative (e.g. Henry et al. 1999). Global relations had growing potency and were associated with selective transformations in state forms (Sassen 1996; Robertson, Bonal, and Dale 2002). Units of nations, including institutions like universities, were becoming tuned to and partly turned to the global. But the nation-state retained its weight: it continued to structure and fund higher education (Marginson and Rhoades 2002).

The flow of new ideas slowed after the mid-2000s but these three groupings of scholars still apply, though confident assertions about globalisation have ebbed. In a review of literature on international and global higher education, Lee and Stensaker (2021) identify three main propositions: the role of nation-states is declining, the nation-state remains important, and institutions adapt to global norms (the last proposition is compatible with either of the other two). In higher education studies there is still no clarity on the national/global relation (Marginson 2022c). It is also noticeable that scholars focused on Knight's Definition OI rarely reference scholars who investigate the global, and vice versa. For more than three decades the two conversations have been largely separated.

Phase 1 in the 1990s: foundations

The Definition OI was introduced by Knight in 1993 and 1994 in papers addressed to practitioners of cross-border higher education in Canada. Knight herself was associated with both governmental coordination of international education, and institution-based practices. She saw the Definition OI as a means of constructing a common field, 'a conceptual model that provides some clarity on meaning and principles to guide policy and practice' (Knight 2004a, 6). 'Definitions can shape policy' (Knight 2003, 2). She was concerned about what she saw as the eclectic application of the term to contrary practices. 'When variations in the interpretation lead to a sense of confusion of why internationalisation is important and, ultimately to a weakened sense of legitimacy and impact, some form of action is necessary' (Knight 1997, 39). The 'clarity' was essential to regulation and self-reflection. 'Internationalisation must have parameters if it is to be assessed' (Knight 1994, 3).

In the Canadian Bureau of International Education's *International Education Magazine* in 1993, Knight defined 'internationalisation' as 'the process of integrating the international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of an institution of higher education' (Knight 1994, 3). In the 1994 *CBIE Research* bulletin she stated that 'an international dimension means a perspective, activity or service which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of an institution of higher education' (3). Not just activity but mentality: 'perspective' and 'outlook'. Knight listed the many places in an institution where an 'international outlook' could be integrated, and discussed in detail rationales and motivations, elements of cross-border activity, academic and organisational factors, 'checkpoints for an internationalisation strategy' with 63 dot points, and a diagrammatic 'internationalisation cycle'. The next year her book with the University of Amsterdam's Hans de Wit was less prescriptive but opened a global conversation (Knight and de Wit 1995), carried by the emerging Internet.

The Definition of OI became amplified by a broad-based network of experts in the international offices of universities such as de Wit, industry associations servicing cross-border programmes, consultants and governmental advisers and officials, initially in the Anglophone countries and Western Europe. Over time shared tacit assumptions and judgments became apparent. Many proponents of the Definition OI advanced cross-border education on the basis of liberal internationalism, the post-World War I Wilson doctrine that shaped the later United Nations (Dagen et al. 2019, 646). According to Brandenburg and de Wit (2011), 'the higher education community still strongly believes that by definition internationalisation leads to peace and mutual understanding, the driving forces behind programmes like Fulbright in the 1950s' (15). However, while liberal internationalism was (and is) couched in universal terms, it was historically and culturally provincial in Chakrabarty's (2000) sense. Like Wilson in 1919, Fulbright in the 1950s saw a Euro-American centric world. In her account of international education in Canada, Trilokekar (2010) describes as one strand of foreign policy Prime Minister Lester Pearson's (1963–1968) advocacy of an inter-state order based on national sovereignty and all-round development in a just and equitable world (144), positioning a high-minded cosmopolitan capitalist state as the carrier of cross-border relations. However, states are rarely so high-minded, and liberal Western economic freedoms are not necessarily compatible with agency in emerging countries. Liberal internationalism has often been a carrier of neo-colonial agendas.

In the early stages Knight (1994) was little concerned about economic globalisation. Commercialisation was largely confined to 'business schools' in Canada (5). However,Knight (1999) registered a shift. Institutions were expected 'to be more entrepreneurial … and think medium to long-term in their approach to the international market' (2). At first Knight was agnostic about this. 'There can be a direct and beneficial relationship between an international market orientation and the internationalisation of the primary functions of a university/ college or institute'. But 'this is not always the case'. The key was to achieve 'balance between income generation motives and academic ones' (8).

In the 1999 paper Knight developed her take on globalisation and internationalisation. She began with the neutral geographical distinction. First, 'in a literal sense, international education can be interpreted to mean "a kind or process of education which involves, relates to or is carried on between two or more nations"' (Knight, 1999, p. 10). Second, the literal meaning of 'global' is '"worldwide" or "relating to the earth or world as a whole", calling up 'connectedness, interdependence' (13), including global flows of 'technology, economy, knowledge, people, ideas' (14). 'The central feature that distinguishes global from international … is the concept of nation' (13). Up to this point Knight's distinction between the adjectives 'international' and 'global' was non-ideological and broadly shared in then higher education studies (e.g. Scott 1998; Marginson and Rhoades 2002). But Knight (1999) used the nouns, the 'isation' words, differently from the adjectives.

The literal approach to internationalisation, meaning between nations, 'results in a rather restricted approach to the concept', Knight stated (1999, 10). Internationalisation and globalisation differed in 'the implied purpose and impact' of each term (13). Here she drew on the good/evil binary of internationalisation and globalisation in the literature. Globalisation was primarily economic globalisation, an external threat to higher education. Internationalisation was 'a response to or result of increased globalisation' from outside (14). It could be controlled by educators within a national framework and was potentially virtuous. Internationalisation was the master concept for unifying practitioners.

Knight avoided a wholly negative view of globalisation but linked it to the suppression of national differences, cultural homogenisation, a 'neo-colonist approach' (Knight 1999, 15) and 'commercialisation' (9). The binary implied that internationalisation was innocent of such effects. Yet early in the same text, Knight acknowledged that outside 'the Western world … internationalisation is seen as a form of westernisation or even neo-colonisation' (1). This ought to have rung alarm bells, but the point was not taken further.

Phase 2 in the 2000s: the knowledge economy and the fault in reality

By the early 2000s, the idea of the global knowledge economy (Olssen and Peters 2005) had been widely installed in policy on cross-border education, led by the Anglophone nations and international agencies using Knight's definition. The discursive joins between economic globalisation, neo-liberal policy and educational marketisation were tightened. Learning and knowledge were imagined as direct sources of economic value via human capital and research-based innovation. In the mid-2000s, global university rankings entrenched what van der Wende (2001) described as a paradigmatic shift from cooperation to competition.

The World Trade Organisation's General Agreement of Trade in Services (WTO GATS) pressed for the deregulation of cross-border trade in education (OECD 2004) despite pushback from some in international education (Altbach 2001) and the multilateral agencies (e.g. UNESCO). Many saw globalisation and internationalisation as synonymous (Teichler 2004, 23), posing a problem for the Definition OI by blurring the lines between liberal internationalism, global trade and global rankings. Commercial international education could be presented as 'integrating an international, intercultural or global aspect' into post-secondary education. But nation-states positioning themselves as competitors in the global knowledge economy could not be relied on to protect institutional autonomy, or social and cultural values. This created a dilemma for the Definition OI. Either the fault was in the definition, in the idea of a virtuous internationalisation both universally inclusive *and* separated from global activity, or the fault was in reality. Knight's Definition OI had become very popular and its creator did not abandon it. Rather, her approach seemed to suggest that reality had failed to conform to the definition. Though Knight's 2003/2004 papers were said to 'update' and 'remodel' the definition its core was largely untouched. Her main focus was her growing concerns about the directions taken by policy and practice.

First, the Definition OI was extended beyond institutions to 'internationalisation at the national, sector and institutional levels'. Second, it was rendered more abstract, universal, and inclusive. Rather than 'teaching, research and service functions' it now referred to 'the purpose, functions or delivery'. This brought in a broader group of providers in commercial and corporate forms of cross-border higher education (Knight 2004a, 11–12).

The author continued to write off the downsides of international relations in higher education as 'globalisation', protecting the ideal of virtuous internationalisation. She expanded on the binary. The two terms were 'purposely used differently' in education (Knight 2005, 5). Internationalisation was the site of 'ongoing and continuous effort' (Knight 2003, 2). Globalisation entailed 'challenges, and risks' (3) to be avoided.

> The discussion does not centre on the globalisation of education. Rather, globalisation is presented as a process impacting internationalisation … In fact, substantial efforts have been made during this past decade to maintain the focus on the internationalisation of education and to avoid using the term globalisation of education. (Knight 2003, 3)

'Globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation', while 'internationalisation is changing the world of education' (3). Again, global economic forces impacted national higher education from outside, but their effects were mediated by the national container and could be modified by the inter-national agency of people and institutions in higher education. People and institutions did not (or should not) exercise global agency outside the national container. This required a gymnastic logic but was oddly comforting. The global element in geography was both screened out as large, external and invasive; and also tucked away as a subset of internationalisation, alongside 'intercultural'. Leaders and staff in higher education who implemented internationalisation activity were positioned in the attractive role of cosmopolitan transformers of their institutions.

Not all was virtuous. Knight (2004a) critiqued the 'increasing emphasis on competition at the international level' and 'a not-so-subtle shift towards developing an international reputation' to boost competitive position (21). Is there a 'discernible shift away from the social and cultural rationales?', she asked (29). She questioned 'branding' (21) and ranking. Knight (2004b) was more

critical. At times World-Class University (WCU) building seemed to be conflated with commercialisation, triggering a defence by Huang (2007) of WCU strategies of catch-up in non-Western countries (58–59). For Knight it was all antithetical to her preferred internationalisation. Yet she did not explicitly proscribe the cross-border activities she disliked, which would have jettisoned the Definition OI's claim to universal coverage of the field. There was 'no right approach' (Knight 2004a, 18). Rather she called for self-reflection and discussion of policies, strategies, programmes and activities (19), and ongoing review of academic, social, cultural, political and economic rationales.

Altbach and Knight (2007) focused on more explicitly on unequal global power, a recurring theme for Altbach.[3] External economic globalisation was again the primary problem. 'Global capital' had 'heavily invested in knowledge industries worldwide' (290). The globalising of knowledge, mobility patterns and the transfer of models from North to South compounded pre-existing global inequalities. 'The North largely controls the process'. The solution was the right kind of programmes, innovations and practices. 'Globalisation may be unalterable, but internationalisation involves many choices' (291). 'We are at a crossroads – today's emerging programmes and practices must ensure that international higher education benefits the public and not simply be a profit centre' (304). But if the path to the public good was internationalisation, the process itself was creating obstacles. And could the global North both lead internationalisation and reduce its own dominance?

Phase 3 in the 2010s: growing disillusionment and the fault in the definition

By the 2010s internationalisation had 'evolved from a marginal and ad hoc range of activities to more comprehensive and central processes and policies' (de Wit forthcoming). The International Association of Universities (IAU) found in 2018 that over 90 per cent of institutions mention 'internationalisation' in the mission or strategic plan, though only a third in North America (Marinoni 2019; de Wit and Altbach 2021). Institutions used the Definition OI freely without taking on the self-examination that Knight mandated, often pursuing contradictory practices. Stein (2021) later remarked on universities that critiqued the Western homogenisation of knowledge, and claimed respect for other cultures, while unabashedly generating profit from emerging country students on the basis of the assumed superiority of Western education inherited from the colonial era (1774).

It was all compatible with the Definition OI and that was the problem. Knight (2011) repeated her earlier concerns. Internationalisation had become 'a catchall phrase … losing its meaning and direction' (14), and 'competitiveness, rankings, and commercialisation seem to be the driving forces' (15). The number of foreign students, or agreements, or marketing, branding, reputation building or international accreditation, should not be equated with internationalisation. Quantitative indicators met accountability requirements but missed the 'intangible' human essence (15). She no longer sought to steer the process with 'checkpoints' as in 1994. Knight still wanted to normalise internationalisation without being overtly prescriptive. She still saw the problem as lying in the reality rather than the universalising definition, or the inability of the definition discourse to nudge reality into line.

Some of Knight's colleagues responded differently. Like Knight they were concerned about the problems in the reality of cross-border education but they now also saw problems in the definition itself. 'Internationalisation is suffering from an identity or mid-life crisis', stated de Wit (2011). Noting 'the changing global landscape and the related debate about internationalisation as a 'Western concept' or as a repetition of the old system by new players', he wanted a reappraisal of relations between the international, intercultural and global. In 'The end of internationalisation', Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) took this further. They questioned the ideological binary. 'Internationalisation has become the white knight of higher education, the moral ground that needs to be defended, and the epitome of justice and equity' while 'globalisation is loaded with negative connotations' (15). 'This constructed antagonism between internationalisation and globalisation' ignores the

fact that economic globalisation is 'increasingly executed under the flag of internationalisation'. 'We have to move away from dogmatic and idealist concepts' (16), focusing on 'values and rationales' that generate 'meaningful' outcomes. 'The future of higher education is a global one' and 'it is our job' to prepare it. 'Possibly we must even leave the old concepts of internationalisation and globalisation and move on to a fresh unbiased paradigm' (17). It was the highpoint of self-critical thinking in the Definition OI camp. But there was to be no final break with the old strategy of using a Western definition to shape worldwide practice.

Knight (2013) did not openly disagree with Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) but held to her earlier line. 'Academics and organisations' wanted 'a new conceptualisation, definition or term for internationalisation'. Yet were 'new words enough' if practice did not change? 'Competition, commercialisation, self-interest, and status building' were winning, meaning internationalisation was 'co-opted by the "dark" side of the globalisation agenda' (89). De Wit (2013) pressed on there should be more focus on 'norms, values, or ethics' and on relations between global and local (6). Leask and de Wit (2016) wanted everyone to 'think locally, nationally and globally', again a larger geography, and to broaden 'the knowledge base of the curriculum beyond the European canon and Western-limited views'. 'Is a more diverse and inclusive internationalisation paradigm replacing the Western paradigm?' hoped de Wit (2019a, 10). Others wanted 'comprehensive internationalisation', 'intelligent internationalisation', 'conscientious internationalisation', 'responsible internationalisation, and 'humanistic internationalisation' (de Wit forthcoming).

In the end, the dissent and alternatives took the form of additional adjectives or extra phrases attached to the original Definition OI. The core wording and hegemonic project remained intact. In a report for the European Parliament de Wit et al. (2015) suggested not 'a fresh unbiased paradigm' but an embellished version of the old paradigm:

> The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (de Wit et al. 2015, 29)

The authors wanted to broaden the agenda beyond revenue generation and research university competition, to foster internationalisation at home, and to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Brandenburg et al. 2019). 'There are tensions between a short term neoliberal approach to internationalisation, focusing primarily on mobility and research, and a long term comprehensive quality approach, global learning for all' (de Wit 2019a, 15). However, the revised definition added further ambiguity ('quality', 'meaningful contribution'), while still admitting most kinds of cross-border practice – and Knight (2003, 2004a) continued to be quoted rather than the definition of de Wit et al. (2015).

None of the new ideas broke with the essential problems of the phase 1 definition: its privileging of the national/international above the global, its ambiguous universalism, and its Euro-American-centrism. But perhaps revising the original Definition OI was no longer an option, in that Knight and colleagues were no longer steering concept or practice. The definition had become a fixed doctrine with its own symbolic power. To open the way to something better, Knight and colleagues would have had to disavow their earlier work. That was a bridge too far. Stein (2021) reflects on the repeated promises to 'reconceptualise', and the 'end of internationalisation' argument. She notes 'the intellectual and affective difficulties of 'imagining otherwise'', and a 'lack of stamina for addressing uncertainty and complexity, and perceived entitlements to autonomy, cohesion and control' (1772).

> In some ways concerns about the 'decline' of internationalisation appears to be a thinly veiled concern about a potential declining advantage and dominance of Western higher education. In particular, there is decreasing certainty that there will be a perpetual pool of international students willing to pay exorbitant prices for study in Western institutions. (Stein 2021, 1775–1776)

'Euro-centred nostalgia' about the pre-commercial era in cross-border education makes it 'easier to uncritically frame the perceived risk of 'decline' in the West as collective, universally-experienced

loss' (Stein 2021, 1776). Critics of commercialism advocate internationalisation for 'the global public good'. But 'who gets to determine what constitutes the global public good?' (1778). Stein calls for an 'internationalisation that might prepare us to surrender our learned sense of superiority and separation, and affirms our radical interdependence and responsibility to each other and the earth itself' (1779).

Discussion: limitations of the idea

The next section expands on the conceptual issues arising from the promotion of the Definition OI in phases 1–3.

Four problems with the Definition OI have become apparent. First, it is not only teleological (purpose driven), but also the purpose of shaping practice tends to crowd out the scholarly mission to understand and explain. Second, the normative project is pursued with a misleading geography. The ideological binary of 'globalisation' and 'internationalisation' conceals from view a large part of cross-border activity and tends to lock practitioners into the neoliberal policies on global competition pursued by national governments. Third, the definition is couched in universal terms that take in almost any and every cross-border educational activity, including commercial activity. This universalism enhances the emotive power of the Definition OI, but again, protects neoliberal agendas, and the ambiguity weakens the definition's purchase on practice. Fourth, the definition inadvertently reinforces global hierarchy in higher education. It locks in a neutral understanding of power: anyone can be a virtuous internationalist. It is non-relational in form, focusing on the nature and practices of the self (or home institution, or home country) rather than the effects on others. Yet its relational effects are profoundly felt. When used in Euro-American systems, and couched in abstract universal form, the focus on the self renders it Western/Northern centric. The sharpest criticism of the Definition OI is from non Euro-American countries where Western internationalisation negates rather than enhances the potentials of agents.

These problems will be discussed in the light of the author's contrasting theorisation of cross-border education (e.g. see Marginson 2022a; 2022c; 2022d). The end of each sub-section suggests an alternative approach to that of Knight and colleagues.

Method: norming practice without explanation

In phase 1 Knight positioned herself and the definition as conceptual in character but practical in intent. The concepts are normative without being explanatory:

> More emphasis is placed on analysing the conceptual aspects of international education (i.e. meaning, rationale and goals) than on operational aspects (programmes and activities). However, it is important to note that it is written from a professional practitioner's perspective not a theoretician's. (Knight 1999, 1)

This is rhetorically powerful as justification for a purpose-driven definition. Who can argue against a concern with practice? The implication, that practitioners know more of the real world than do theorists, does not need to be added. But there is something worrying about the statement. Consider the reverse argument. 'I am a theoretician not a professional practitioner. However, I have advice on how your work should be done. (Subtext: My status as a theoretician suggests that you should listen and learn)'. That is equally valid/invalid.

Knight (1994) stated that she was working conceptually. The Definition OI and its associated arguments should be judged on the basis of intellectual coherence and explanatory power as well as their practical orientation. Why pose an either/or opposition between conceptualisation and practice? All world views, including those of practitioners, are ultimately shaped by theory (Swedberg 2014). A scholarship of practice should be open, unambiguous and verifiable so as to enable a productive relation between concept-research-practice. It should be possible to develop ideas about cross-border education that are all of conceptually robust, insightful of empirical realities and

applicable in practice – ideas useful to both practitioners and scholars. The problem is not that the Definition OI was coined for practitioners. The problem is that it does not tick all these boxes. This is because it is not a realist theorisation, it is normative exhortation to an ideal and 'outlook' (Knight 1994, 3). The Definition OI is a closed concept rather than an open theory and as such has a limited capacity to understand changes in cross-border education.

Friedman (2017) locates Knight's internationalisation in an older 'advocacy tradition' in American cross-border education (10–11). There are 'limitations to this approach for the social scientific study of higher education', states Friedman. It is 'hard to separate analysis from advocacy'. While the notion of 'best practices' serves 'to orient a community of practice that believes in this cause', Definition OI best practices are based on an ideal rather than empirically grounded realities (12). Friedman helps to explain the doctrinal aspect of the Definition OI with its ideological baggage. This is discussed in the next sub-section.

Alternative approach to method

Terminology and definitions should be conceptually robust, illuminate cross-border education in changing circumstances, and be useful to both scholars and practitioners. If a definition is purpose driven it should still maximise the scope for explanation. For example, concepts should illuminate educational justice in cross-border education not by pre-setting what can be observed and discussed, but by broadly illuminating reality, enabling people to make up their own minds about issues of justice.

Geography as ideology

In phase 1 Knight (1999) started with a neutral geographical distinction between national and global activity in higher education but reframed this as internationalisation (good) versus globalisation (bad). Visible and legitimate cross-border educational practices proceeded only from within the 'national container' (Shahjahan and Kezar 2013), which was meant to protect higher education from the downsides of economic globalisation.

As noted, Knight's collaborators occasionally introduce a less prejudicial globalisation (de Wit and Altbach 2011; Leask and de Wit 2016), and others have critiqued the binary geography (van der Wende 2002). Teichler (2009) notes that institutions pursue both collaborative and educational agendas *and* competitive and economic agendas, but there is no correlation between agenda and geographic scale. Institutions pursue economic or status competition both when they see the world in terms of fixed national boundaries, and when they see it globally in blurred national boundaries. Beck (2012) remarks that if globalisation and internationalisation are distinct and opposing, and only the latter secures agent identity, 'how then did internationalisation go the way of economic globalisation? Where can agency be found?' (138). However, Knight's formulation is explicitly endorsed in part or whole by many scholars: for example van Vught, van der Wende, and Westerheijden (2002), Horie (2002), Currie et al. (2003), Chan (2004), Unterhalter and Carpentier (2010), Warwick (2014), Scott (2017). Knight has never jettisoned the ideological approach. This crucial part of the Definition OI remains intact.

Knight's geography resonates with commonly-held perceptions of how the world works. It is hard to grasp global activity outside the nation-state. Wimmer and Schiller (2003) refer to 'methodological nationalism', 'the belief that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world' (301). In this framework cross-border activity is both wholly determined by the nation-state, and also marginal to it, with global relations and forces external to higher education as in the Definition OI. (Critiques of methodological nationalism in higher education include Dale 2005; Lo and Ng 2013; Shahjahan and Kezar 2013; Marginson 2022a). On the methodologically nationalist terrain, the Definition OI seems to empower local higher education agents. It identifies the moves they can make in response to globalisation. You can take control, it states. Together

with your national government, a useful ally, while pursuing your chosen cross-border activities you protect higher education by moderating, blocking and diverting global economic forces.

Even some who know higher education has a multiple geography focus solely on the national scale because it governs policy and regulation; for example, Friedman's (2017) administrators of international programmes in the US and UK.

However, the Definition OI's ideological geography has two costs. First, national governments often join themselves to global economics, and Knight's formula ties persons and institutions to national policies that includes neo-liberal and global knowledge economy agendas, and also national security agendas. Second, it obscures or marginalises global and regional phenomena that transcend nations, such as communicative links, and global science which has expanded rapidly and in epistemic terms overshadows national science (Marginson 2022b), and also obscures the regional (Robertson et al. 2016). Global and regional activities are largely resourced at nation-state level but their dynamics exceed national control (e.g. see Wagner, Park, and Leydesdorff 2015 on autonomous global science). The nation-bound Definition OI approach also downplays the potentials for cosmopolitan diversity in education. It 'precludes a planetary consciousness, as we are stuck in global discourses underpinned by nation-state categories and identities' (Shahjahan and Grimm 2022, 10).

Case studies by Cantwell and Maldonado-Maldonado (2009) in the Middle East and Latin America confirm the common-sense potency of the Definition OI. In all four cases interviewees saw the global as external and transcendent, with local agents compelled to react to it (303). The authors conclude that while the Definition OI is 'theoretically unsatisfying', the definition is itself 'part of a technology of governance … under this conceptualisation, globalisation is seen as monolithic and unproblematic and the range of potential reactive positions is predetermined' (304). These potential positions are defined by national government policies. This helps to explain the broad take up of the Definition OI in governments which use it to embed higher education in knowledge economy agendas.

Alternative approach to geography

All kinds of space, whether global, national or local, are continually constructed by human agents (Robertson, Bonal, and Dale 2002). Global practices 'are utterly everyday and grounded, at the same as they may, when linked together, go round the world' (Massey 2005, 7). Global activities are not transcendent or external to higher education. Higher education is both subject and object of globalisation (Scott 1998), both actor and reactor (Beerkens 2004). Institutions and persons respond to global forces and agents, and national filtering of the global. They also see and implement opportunities for cross-border action. There are many kinds of global and international action. There is nothing necessary about locating global interconnectivity and interdependence in the knowledge economy imaginary (Rizvi and Lingard 2009, 90; Rizvi, Lingard, and Rinne 2022). Santos (2007) suggests 'an alternative, counter-hegemonic globalisation' based on epistemic heterogeneity, including indigenous knowledge, and 'the university as public good' (78).

The keys are to recognise that (a) social systems are open systems, and theories that assume closure of the global should be avoided (Sayer 2000); (b) meanings change over time as the world changes; and (c) higher education is engaged in multiple geographical scales (national, regional, global, local), which are in motion. Agents move between scales and combine them, scales are interpenetrated, and causation flows in all directions. Activity in any scale can be any or all of economic, social, political, cultural, epistemic and educational in character (Marginson 2022c). No one scale is necessarily or always in command. While the nation was very dominant after World War II, after 1990 the weight of the global grew, without displacing the nation (Robertson, Bonal, and Dale 2002), through intensified flows of people, money, information, ideas and models; global comparison; and global science (Marginson 2022a). This is not to say the global is always more inclusive (e.g. science excludes nearly all knowledge in languages other than English: Marginson and Xu 2023). The last decade has seen a recession in economic globalisation

and stronger political assertion of the nation-state, without eliminating the global in higher education.

The double geography of cross-border education, with both national/international and global relations, sustains two kinds of practice. First, international relations shaped within national policy and regulation and the multilateral inter-state order (e.g. student visas). Second, global relations where institutions, people and ideas move across borders with little national intervention (e.g. research, online programmes). Institutions, and persons, pursue a mix of international and global connections. State agencies pursue inter-governmental activity but also participate in global systems like networked science. Differences between these two kinds of cross-border relation matter. In international action, people and institutions draw on resources from government while operating within its regulatory framework. In global activities, they have less state support but more freedom to act.

The two sets of relations feed each other (Marginson 2022b). Global convergence created conditions for intensified internationalisation (Knight 2004a). The reverse is also true. Repeated international connections foster global integration (Conrad 2016; Zha and Xu 2001, 103) and even partial 'de-nationalisation' in education (Teichler 2004, 23).

The multiple scalar geography of higher education is instinctively grasped by institutional leaders, scientists and mobile students. Mapping cross-border practices using a rigid framework that correlates norms to scales, as in the Definition OI, undermines that understanding. However, once the definition's ideological baggage is dropped, disinterested terminology can be employed, as in other disciplines (e.g. scale in geography).

In Table 1 the nouns 'internationalisation' and 'globalisation' are neutral. Specific kinds of cross-border activity, involving different interests and values, are indicated by attaching adjectives. For example, 'neo-liberal globalisation' (or neo-liberal internationalisation) refers to the spread of policies that further economic markets, capital accumulation and business models. Both globalisation and internationalisation can be captured by capitalism, geo-politics, soft power agendas or university self-interest. 'Neo-colonial internationalisation' refers to inter-national relations with asymmetric agency, coercion or dependence in continuity with colonialism. 'Communicative globalisation' refers to worldwide convergence and/or integration via the extension and intensification of networked messaging and data transfer. 'Democratic globalisation' means worldwide relations grounded in openness, distributed agency and rights. 'Reciprocal internationalisation' indicates inter-national relations regulated by just exchange, equal respect and mutual influence. And so on.

The claim to be universal

Having legitimated commercialism, competition and rankings, against their better instincts, Knight and colleagues vacillate between calls to review practice (seeing the fault as lying in reality) and new wording (seeing the fault as lying in the definition). But the fault is in the whole project – in the promotion of a universal definition of internationalisation and the expectation that a heterogeneous reality will somehow fall into line with the definition.

Table 1. Preferred approach to definitions that are derived from 'international' and 'global'.

Term	Definition
International	Phenomena, processes or relations between nations (inter-national) or between organisations or persons in nations
Internationalisation	Creation or growth of relations between nations, or between organisations or persons in nations
Global	Phenomena, processes or relations pertaining to the world as a whole, or a large part of the world
Globalisation	Any extension or intensification of relations on the world or planetary scale, leading to convergence and/or integration (note that there are multiple processes, plural globalisations)

Source: Author.

Curiously, Knight acknowledges the obstacles to a universalising definition, but still creates one. Higher education has many countries, systems and contexts (Knight 2003, 2). Stakeholders have diverse purposes, agendas and perspectives (Knight 1999, 10). She is 'not developing a universal definition'– yet it is important to ensure 'that the meaning is appropriate for a broad range of contexts and countries in the world' (Knight 2003, 2). More strongly: 'it is important to have a common understanding of the term so that when we discuss and analyse the phenomenon [internationalisation] we understand one another and also refer to the same phenomenon when advocating for increased attention and support' (Knight 2004a, 9). It is soft universalism, but universalism nevertheless. The abstract inclusive form of the Definition OI maximises its reach and feeds powerful affective notions of a shared mission that is inherently virtuous. From time to time, Knight distances herself from the idea that any cross-border activity is desirable (e.g. Knight 2013), but she and other proponents of the Definition OI are talking up a cause, as Friedman (2017) notes.

However, if the Definition OI is to function as a universal there must be a priori agreement on the purposes of 'integrating' an international, intercultural or global dimension. Authentic agreement on this is no more feasible than having a single purpose or value of higher education itself, with its multiple missions and stakeholders. Further, by obscuring the actual localities, interests, differences and faultlines in cross-border education, the single universal internationalisation again reduces the purchase on practice (Friedman 2017, 14). The most spectacular example of this is the imposition of a would-be universal Western internationalisation in non-Western countries, as will be discussed.

Alternative approach to universalism

The goal of unifying the higher education world on the basis of a single idea of cross-border education, with one meaning, and to pattern practice along similar lines, should be abandoned. Rather, concepts should help to explain cross-border higher education with maximum inclusion and clarity, enabling the full and free identification of similarities, differences and ethical positions so as to inform practice.

Geo-politics: western-centrism

The singular, universal form of the Definition OI begs the question of its cultural content and political meanings. Liberal internationalism assumes that one set of Euro-American values and practices can be applied everywhere. Yet this would-be universal is provincial and particular. Beck and Grande (2010) critique ideas of convergence based on 'a homogeneous and universal model of Western modernity' (413). In a decolonial world this position is increasingly difficult to sustain. Euro-American hegemony is fragmenting – for example the multi-polarisation evident in the rise of China and the strengthening of higher education in East Asia, Southeast Asia, India, Iran, the Middle East/North Africa and Latin America, and the role of regional nodes in student mobility. The Definition OI has not evolved to incorporate political, cultural and knowledge plurality and decoloniality. To do this would weaken its claim to embody a singular world approach.

The problem is not just continuing inequality but continuing history. Knight's call to internationalisation follows two hundred years of Euro-American domination. Eurocentrism is 'the most fundamental issue' in international higher education (Yang 2019, 65; Lo and Ng 2013, 38). Advocates of the Definition OI know the world is diverse, and coloniality matters, yet nothing in the definition overturns its default Euro-American centrism.

The Anglophone world, France, Netherlands, Belgium and Russia between them educate most incoming cross-border students. These former colonising nations maintain patterns of brain drain and epistemic exclusion inherited from military colonialism and the neo-imperial US domination after World War II. Neo-colonial relations in education are sustained by inherited institutional power, global English and the compelling attractions of Whiteness to cross-border students (Shahjahan and Edwards 2022). Relations between Euro-American higher education and the rest

'continue to be predicated on the Western belief that it is morally superior and that it is its right to act on such a basis' (Yang 2019, 66). One test is the Anglophone curriculum. In the thirty years since Knight (1994) its contents have been scarcely touched by non Euro-American knowledge. Programmes for global citizenship and competences mostly (not always) equip Euro-Americans to operate freely across the world, in continuity with colonial Orientalism (Said 2003). Capacity building projects in emerging countries often perpetuate dependence on the West. All of this calls for a wrenching self-appraisal in the former colonising countries as Stein (2021) notes. Nothing in the Definition OI triggers this all-important self-appraisal.

What Knight (1999) calls 'neo-colonisation' is not a pathology of globalisation separate from and opposed to internationalisation. It has long been part of inter-national dealings and will remain so until the relational structure of internationalisation changes. This relational structure – or, rather, the lack of one – is a key weakness in the definition.

As Knight (2004a) rightly states, 'the term international emphasises … the relationship between and among different nations' (8). But this sensibility is not structured into the definition. The Definition OI is *solely focused on the qualities of the self* (whether person, institution or nation) without regard for the effects on the other. Internationalisation is 'integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education'. Changing one's own education is the end in itself, not fostering outcomes for all parties. The Definition OI formula sees the institution as 'a point where activity begins and ends' (Beck 2012, 142) not as part of a larger constellation of connections. It not only allows agents to be self-referencing without being other-referencing, it shuts out the effects of self-internationalisation on the other. When Definition OI internationalisation is pursued by Euro-American institutions and systems, Euro-American centrism is structured into its very core. The framing is narcissistic and negates the very idea of *inter-national* relations. The other side of the Western claim to universalism is autarkic Western individualism and self-regard.

It is unsurprising that the Definition OI is harshly criticised from non-Western positions. From the global East, Yang (2014) states that in 'non-Western societies … a so-called "international" perspective has been imposed from the outset' (153).

> What is lacking is an appropriate combination of the 'international' and the local. Within the contemporary context of Western dominance, internationalisation of higher education in non-Western societies necessarily touches on longstanding knotty issues and tensions between Westernisation and indigenisation. This is particularly true in China, a country with a continuous history of fostering unique cultural heritages for thousands of years. (Yang 2014, 153)

From the global South, Ogachi (2009) states that the pre-existing global hierarchy, global competition for student talent, and exploitative commercial providers, 'deconstruct the notion of an altruistic internationalisation of higher education process'. Internationalisation deepens 'the relation of dependency of local higher education institutions on higher education institutions in industrialised countries' (333). Teferra (2019a) takes issue with the 'intentional' internationalisation in the rebadged definition of de Wit et al. (2015). 'Internationalisation as regards the global South, particularly Africa, is far from being an intentional process'. There universities engage in 'massive consumption' of ideas, knowledge and textbooks from the global North 'while staunchly, but helplessly, adhering the international academic and scholastic norms and values'. Global rankings 'have pushed the internationalisation pendulum from intention to coercion', pressuring institutions 'to do things not necessarily within the realm of burning institutional needs'. Teferra (2019b) sees the 'benevolent intentionality in internationalisation' as 'a continuation of the neo-colonial project'. He wants 'a more neutral, robust, "intention free" and inclusive definition'. Definitions should not focus on what internationalisation 'ought to be'. They should be realistic, focusing 'on the essence of the phenomenon'.

In response de Wit (2019b) acknowledges that most discussion of internationalisation 'has focused on the Western world, with little attention being paid to the implications of colonisation'.

Table 2. Some questions about relationality and power in cross-border higher education.

Practices	Key questions
Global scale	
Cooperation in science and knowledge	Which knowledge is included in the recognised global pool and which is excluded (nations, places of origin, languages, disciplines etc.)?
	Who has access to what knowledge and on what basis (factors of openness and cost)? Who makes the decisions about knowledge validation and inclusion?
	In a research partnership, who initiates? Who sets the terms? What is the division of labour? Who determines topic and method? Authorship? Resource flows?
Partnerships between universities	In a bilateral partnership between institutions, who initiates? What is the net flow of resources? Who sets the terms of the agreement and its monitoring?
Mobility of institutions	What is the operating basis? Home country rules, language, host country, a hybrid? How are governance and accountability configured? Resource flows?
Mobility of programmes	Which party regulates the content and mode of delivery? Access and distribution? What is the language of learning? How open is the programme?
National/international scale	
Cross-border mobility of persons for study	In considering bilateral relations between two countries, what is the balance of people movement (temporary and permanent) between them?
	What are financial flows between the country of student origin and the country of education, taken all aspects into account?
	To what extent are curricula and pedagogy transformed by educational mobility, i.e. what educational-cultural hybridity develops, if any?
Joint programmes with national agreement	Who initiates? Who sets programme terms and contents? What is the division of labour? Flows of resources, knowledge, people? Is ongoing dependency created?

Source: author.

Agency must be built in Africa. Yet the two are at cross-purposes. De Wit wants the West to bring others in. Teferra wants a different relational framework.

Alternative approach to global relations

It is essential to step away from the Western hegemonic project and facilitate diversity of models and languages, the interdependence of human agents, mutual learning, and equality of respect. Concepts should facilitate the observation, analysis and understanding of *relationality* in cross-border higher education, including inequality, domination/subordination and inclusion/exclusion (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2 suggests ways that all parties can reflexively interrogate relations of power in cross-border education, research, administration and quality assurance. These questions can be addressed empirically using quantitative and qualitative methods. Building on Table 2, Table 3 suggests

Table 3. Plural, democratic and reflexive cross-border relations in higher education.

Term	Definition
Equivalent internationalisation	The advance of cross-border relations in higher education in which all nations or institutions in nations, and their cultures and languages, share common status, agentic autonomy and entitlements to justice.
Mutual internationalisation	The advance of cross-border relations in higher education based on equality of respect, interdependent agency, justice and non-exploitation, free diversity, learning from the other, and shared responsibility for each other and the common good.
Decolonial internationalisation	The advance of relations between higher education in former colonised and colonising countries on the basis of equality of respect and agentic authority, non exploitation, appreciation of diversity, and shared determination to address the hierarchies, violence and other pathologies of the past and root out their reproduction.
Multi-polar globalisation	The extension or intensification of worldwide relations in higher education on the basis of multiple agency, resources and status; in which no single centre, power bloc or culture is hegemonic.
Interdependent globalisation	The extension or intensification of worldwide relations in higher education on the basis of openness, diversity, free connectivity of autonomous agents, mutual growth and learning, respect for others and for nature, and shared responsibility for each other, nature and the common good.

Source: author.

definitions of internationalisation and globalisation that incorporate decolonising, non-exploitative and non-hierarchical relations (see also the discussion of *tianxia* in Yang, Marginson, and Xu 2022). The definitions do not address all cross-border educational practices as does the Definition OI. Table 3 focuses on particular kinds of practices.

Conclusion

The Definition OI project is the unification of research and practice in cross-border higher education on the basis of hegemonic concepts and their interpretation. This project has had a 30-year trial and its defects are clear. It should be abandoned.

Open and plural reality cannot be shaped to match the normative and universalising definition, while a definition restricted by Euro-American centrism and a disabling geography cannot adequately explain the real. Advocates of the Definition OI have alternately sought to explain the failure of reality and definition to match as a fault in (a) the practice of cross-border education, or (b) the wording of the definition. This vacillation runs through the literature and powers debate within the Definition OI network. But the definition and reality can never align. The whole strategy was always flawed.

From time to time advocates of the Definition OI have questioned the ideological geography and raised the problem of Western-centrism (e.g. Brandenburg and de Wit 2011) but the doctrinal project itself and its universalism, its claim to unite scholarship and practice in a single totemic sentence rolled out from the West across the world, have never been abandoned. The purpose and core wording of the original 1990s definition have survived each turn in the debate. The flexible application of the Definition OI in diverse national and local contexts, its many permutations in which the essential mission is restated, recall the comment of Shahjahan and Edwards (2022) about the 'malleability' of hegemony, 'its ability to shape-shift in response to its present environment to (re)construct its past and future' (2). The modest self-criticism and the 'end of internationalisation' talk have served to protect and prolong the discourse. Remarkably, it remains dominant.

It is essential to start again, with an approach less ambitious and more ambitious. Less ambitious, in that it abandons the unrealistic conceit of uniting all cross-border practices. More ambitious, in being internally coherent, more explanatory, more effective in shaping reciprocity in cross-border higher education, and combining discussion of the inter-national with the global and worldwide scales. Tables 1–3 are a modest beginning. As the hegemony of the Definition OI begins to fade many more voices and ideas will emerge.

Notes

1. The term 'higher education' here equates with UNESCO's (2022) tertiary education, e.g. including two-year programmes in community colleges in the United States.
2. 17 September 2023.
3. In 'Servitude of the mind? Education dependency, and neocolonialism' Altbach (1977) described global asymmetries in resources, technologies, language use, and cross-border mobility. Industrialised nations had controlling influence in nations in the 'periphery' (197–198). He emphasised the need to build independent intellectual agency (204), long before these issues were widely discussed in global literature.

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